

Troilus and
Crisseyde.
Liber I.

But he that parted is in every place
Is nowher hool, as writen clerkes wyse;
What wonder is, though swich oon have no grace?
Eek wostow how it fareth of som servyse?
His plaunte a tre or herbe, in sondry wyse,
And on the morwe pulle it up as blyve,
No wonder is, though it may never thryve.

And sith that god of love hath thee bistowed
In place digne unto thy worthinesse,
Stond faste, for to good port hastow rowed;
And of thyself, for any hevynesse,
Hope alwey wel; for, but if drerinesse
Or overhaste our bothe labour shende,
I hope of this to maken a good ende.

And wostow why I am the lasse afered
Of this matere with my nece trete?
For this have I herd seyde of wyse pyled:
Was never man ne woman yet bigete
That was unapt to suffren loves hete
Celestial, or elles love of kinde,
Forthy som grace I hope in hir to finde.

And for to speke of hir in special,
Hir beautee to bithinken and hir youthe,
It sit hir nought to be celestial
As yet, though that hir liste bothe and couthe;
But trewely, it sete hir wel right nouthe
A worthy knight to loven and cheryce,
And but she do, I holde it for a vyce.

Wherfore I am, and wol be, ay redy
To peyne me to do yow this servyse;
For bothe yow to plesse thus hope I
Hereafterward; for ye beth bothe wyse,
And conne it counseyl kepe in swich a wyse,
That no man shal the wyser of it be;
And so we may be gladed alle three.

And, by my trouthe, I have right now of thee
A good conceyt in my wit, as I gesse,
And what it is, I wol now that thou see.
I thenke, sith that love, of his goodnesse,
Hath thee converted out of wikkednesse,
That thou shalt be the beste post, I leve,
Of al his lay, and most his foos togreve.

Ensamble why, see now these wyse clerkes,
That erren aldermost ayein a lawe,
And ben converted from hir wikked werkes
Thorough grace of God, that list hem to him drawe,
Than am they folk that han most God in awe,
And strengest feythed been, I understonde,
And conne an errour alderbest withstonde.

Whan Troilus had herd Pandare assented
To been his help in loving of Crisseyde,
Wex of his wo, as who seyth, untormented,
But hotter wex his love, and thus he seyde,
With sobre chere, although his herte pleyde:
Now blisful Venus helpe, er that I sterve,
Of thee, Pandare, I may som thank deserve.

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But, dere frend, how shal myn wo ben lesse
Til this be doon? and goode, eek tel me this,
How wiltow seyn of me and my destresse?
Lest she be wrooth, this drede I most, ywis,
Or nil not here or trowen how it is.
Al this drede I, and eek for the manere
Of thee, hir eem, she nil no swich thing here.

Quod Pandarus: Thou hast a ful gret care
Lest that the cheryl may falle out of the mone!
Why, Lord! I hate of thee thy nyce fare!
Why, entremete of that thou hast to done!
For Goddes love, I bidde thee a bone,
So lat me alone, and it shal be thy beste.
Why, freend, quod he, now do right as thee
leste.

But herke, Pandare, o word, for I nolde
That thou in me wendest so greet folye,
That to my lady I desiren sholde
That toucheth harm or any vilenye;
For dredelees, me were lever dye
Than she of me ought elles understode
But that, that mighte sounen into gode.

Tho lough this Pandare, & anon answerde:
And I thy borw? fy! no wight dooth but so;
I roughte nought though that she stode & herde
How that thou seyst; but farewel, I wol go.
Adieu! be glad! God spede us bothe twof
Yif me this labour and this besinesse,
And of my speed be thyn al that swetnesse.

Tho Troilus gan down on knees to falle,
And Pandare in his armes hente faste,
And seyde: Now, fy on the Grekes alle!
Yet, pardee, God shal helpe us at the laste;
And dredelees, if that my lyf may laste,
And God toforn, lo, som of hem shal smerte;
And yet me athinketh that this avaunt me asterte!

And now, Pandare, I can no more seye,
But thou wys, thou wost, thou mayst, thou art all
My lyf, my deeth, hool in thyn honde I leve;
Help now, quod he. Yis, by my trouthe, I shal.
God yelde thee, freend, and this in special,
Quod Troilus, that thou me recomaunde
To hir that to the deeth me may comaunde.

This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve
His fulle freend, than seyde in this manere:
Farwel, and thenk I wol thy thank deserve;
Have here my trouthe, & that thou shalt wel here.
And wente his wey, thenking on this matere,
And how he best mighte hir beseche of grace,
And finde a tyme therto, and a place.

For every wight that hath an hous to founde
Ne renneth nought the werk for to biginne
With rakel hond, but he wol byde a stounde,
And sende his hertes lyne out fro withinne
Alderfirst his purpos for to winne.
Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte,
And caste his werk ful wysly, or he wroughte.

But Troilus lay tho no lenger down,
But up anon upon his stede bay,
And in the feld he pleyde tho leoun;
Was that Grek that with him mette that day,
And in the toun his maner tho forth ay
So goodly was, and gat him so in grace,
That ech him lovede that looked on his face.

For he bicom the frendlyeste wight,
The gentileste, and eek the moste free,
The thurfieste and oon the beste knight,
That in his tyme was, or mighte be.

Dede were his japes and his crueltee,
His heighe port and his manere estraunge,
And ech of tho gan for a vertu chaunge.

Now lat us stinte of Troilus a stounde,
That fareth lyk a man that hurt is sore,
And is somdel of akinge of his wounde
Ylissed wel, but heled no del more:
And, as an esy pacient, the lore
Abit of him that gooth aboute his cure;
And thus he dryveth forth his aventure.

Explicit Liber Primus.

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